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8 October 1959

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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

8 October 1959

### DAILY BRIEF

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#### I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

#### II. ASIA-AFRICA

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Cambodia: Prince Sihanouk has called on Cambodians to "choose between" his own leadership and rebel leaders Sam Sary and Son Ngoc Thanh who, he charges, are supported by "certain foreign powers" and advocate alignment with SEATO. Sihanouk said that if he wins the as yet unscheduled referendum, any nation which continues to support the rebel leaders "will be considered a nation hostile to the Cambodian people." The announcement follows a public trial of supporters of the abortive coup last spring by Dap Chhuon, in which both Sam Sary and Son Ngoc Thanh were involved. Sihanouk had also accused Thailand and South Vietnam of supporting the coup. The public revival of these charges threatens to renew dissension between Cambodia and its neighbors.

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Laos: Rebel harassment and propaganda activities continued in widespread areas of Laos during the past few days. Skirmishes and concentrations of rebel groups are reported in southern Laos. Aircraft on a resupply mission to Lao troops surrounded at Muong Son in western Sam Neua Province were subjected to rebel mortar fire on 5 October.

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Watch Committee conclusion--Laos: Dissident activity has remained at a low level. The dissidents, however, with probable North Vietnamese assistance, continue to have the objective of establishing themselves in a strong position which they could use as the basis for political bargaining or for the expansion of military operations.

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Ceylon: Prime Minister Dahanayake, in his first official conversation with the American ambassador on 6 October, made a bid for American support. Dahanayake commented critically on certain Communist-bloc actions and said he wished to work closely with the West. He also felt it a mistake for Ceylon to have taken over British military bases on the island, and said he hoped he could find a way to undo the effects of this error. Dahanayake, who is not yet assured of a working majority in Parliament, will probably move slowly, however, in making any changes, in order not to antagonize nationalistic elements. 25X1

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\*Lebanon: President Shihab, succumbing to pressures from religious sects not represented in the former four-man cabinet, on 7 October reshuffled and doubled the size of the cabinet. Again headed by Prime Minister Karami, the new cabinet includes representatives of several additional religious groups. Shihab will probably be unable to keep the tight control he formerly exercised over the cabinet. 25X1

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Watch Committee conclusion--Middle East: Situations susceptible of direct exploitation by Sino-Soviet bloc action which would jeopardize US interests exist in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Iran. The situation in Iraq continues to be tense. The attempted assassination of Qasim has resulted in intensified security measures and may be followed by numerous arrests of suspected antiregime elements. Although efforts are being made to maintain order, further attempts against Qasim are possible, and factional strife may break out. In these circumstances, direct UAR involvement in Iraq, with a consequent increase in the danger of broader hostilities in the area, is possible.

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DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

## II. ASIA-AFRICA

### Cambodian Leader Proclaims Referendum

Cambodian Premier Sihanouk has proclaimed a people's referendum to choose between his leadership, based on a policy of neutrality, and that of dissident leaders Sam Sary and Son Ngoc Thanh, "who advocate Cambodia's membership in SEATO." Sihanouk has announced he will resign in favor of a "neutral" premier during the as yet undesignated referendum period, and has promised to go into exile or submit to trial if the vote goes against him. Victory is a foregone conclusion, and Sihanouk, in a move to forestall charges of a rigged vote, proposes that the referendum be organized under the supervision of the International Control Commission (ICC) and of observers from "those foreign powers which have supported Sam Sary and Son Ngoc Thanh."

The referendum announcement follows a recent public trial of accomplices of dissident General Dap Chhuon, who lost his life in an abortive coup against Sihanouk last spring. The trial, which resulted in 16 death verdicts including in absentia sentences for Sam Sary and Son Ngoc Thanh, rehashed evidence of support of the coup by South Vietnam and, to a lesser extent, Thailand.

Aside from the referendum's inherent advantages of rallying further popular support, Sihanouk's primary aim apparently is to stigmatize external support of the dissident "Free Cambodia" movement. He has warned that if he wins, any nation which continues to abet the treasonable activities of Sam Sary and Son Ngoc Thanh "will lose the friendship of the people of Cambodia." Sihanouk apparently is convinced that South Vietnam has not only continued to support the Cambodian dissidents but has recently stepped up its intrigues to a dangerous level. Sihanouk's course is likely to antagonize South Vietnam and could bring a revival of dissension between Cambodia and its neighbors which the Communists could again exploit.

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Communist Harassment in Laos Continuing

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25X1 [redacted] continuing small-scale clashes in widely scattered areas and to Communist efforts, particularly in southern Laos, to build a potential for guerrilla warfare through recruitment of new personnel and the occasional seizure of arms. The Laotian Government is concerned especially over reports of concentrations of rebel forces in Champassak, Attapeu, and Saravane provinces because the area is only lightly held and the army cannot spare units now employed in the north.]

25X1 [In Sam Neua Province, Communist elements which for some weeks have been in the vicinity of the government post at Muong Son are reported to have begun attacking the post on 5-6 October. Aircraft on a resupply mission to Lao troops surrounded at Muong Son were subjected to rebel mortar fire on 5 October. In the northeastern part of the province, Laotian Army efforts to regain the ground lost in the 30 August Communist attacks on several posts on the Nam Ma River are meeting with uncertain results.]

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[A UN subcommittee contingent has flown to Luang Prabang for a brief visit to interrogate prisoners and take statements from wounded soldiers. The bulk of the mission is expected to leave Laos shortly, but a few individuals may remain to assure a continuing UN presence.] [redacted]

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[redacted]

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Ceylonese Prime Minister Privately States  
Anti-Communist Views

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[The strong anti-Communist line taken by Prime Minister Dahanayake in his first official conversation with the American ambassador since assuming office on 26 September is consistent with previous indications that Dahanayake intends to pursue a moderate course. The prime minister sharply criticized the conditions attached to the Sino-Soviet aid programs in Ceylon, and said he wished to work closely with the West. He also deplored former Prime Minister Bandaranaike's termination of Britain's military base rights in Ceylon in late 1957, and expressed his hope to modify the effects of this mistake.]

[The import of Dahanayake's statements is reduced considerably, however, by his comment that he cannot express such views publicly, and by his previous public pledges to continue Bandaranaike's neutralist-socialist policies. Dahanayake has said publicly that he will soon implement Bandaranaike's long-standing, popular proposal to change Ceylon's status from that of a British dominion to a completely independent republic. Returning the naval and air bases to British control would not only be incompatible with Ceylon's future status as a republic, but probably would be stiffly opposed by the island's influential Buddhist-nationalist forces, which Dahanayake is considered to represent. Furthermore, any substantial shift to a pro-West orientation probably would not be endorsed by the Ceylonese Parliament, in which Dahanayake has not yet been guaranteed a safe majority.]

[Dahanayake presumably values congenial relations with all foreign diplomatic personnel in Ceylon, and his conversation with the American ambassador seems primarily a bid for continued American support. He may have conversed with Communist-bloc diplomats in a different vein. At a press conference on 2 October a seven-member Soviet parliamentary delegation which arrived in Ceylon on 16 September reportedly expressed satisfaction with Dahanayake's assurance that Ceylon's foreign policy would remain unchanged.]

[Should Dahanayake remain in office long enough to take action on his indicated policies, his anti-Communist sentiment probably would be demonstrated primarily in connection with suppressing strikes by labor unions affiliated with Ceylon's leftist political parties.]

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### The Lebanese Situation

President Shihab on 7 October succumbed to pressures from political leaders of Lebanon's many religious sects and enlarged the four-man Karami cabinet to include eight members. The new cabinet includes representatives of several additional sects. Former Interior Minister Raymond Edde, who had long professed a desire to return to his law practice, was dropped. His political rival Pierre Jumayyil, head of the Maronite Phalange, remains as minister of public works, and ailing Husayn Uwayni will retain the Foreign Ministry portfolio. Karami now holds the posts of prime minister, finance, and defense.

Lebanon's deteriorating relations with the UAR may become an issue in the new cabinet. During the past month several incidents have occurred to complicate Prime Minister Karami's policy of cordial relations with the UAR--

an embargo on the import of Lebanese apples to the UAR, the holding of extensive anti-Iraqi demonstrations throughout Lebanon, and a recent prohibition of travel by Syrians to Lebanon. Any of these incidents may be exploited by various interested parties, especially by ex-President Chamoun, who recently suffered an election defeat in the Druze area.

President Shihab's control over the cabinet will be loosened, and he is likely to be plagued with a return to the traditional confusion of Lebanese politics, with various factions contending for the spoils of office. His program of governmental reform, already slowed by cabinet dissensions, is likely to be further hampered. Accompanying this new state of affairs will be a less complacent parliament and increased demands for new parliamentary elections.

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